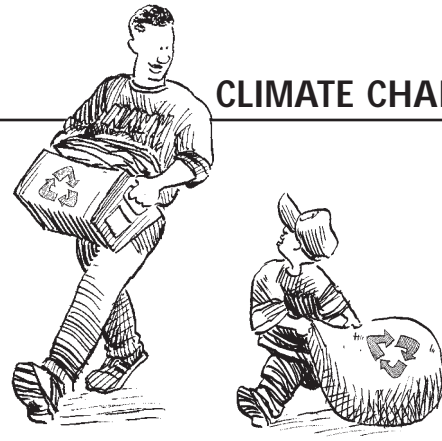




Statewide Recycling



EPA's State and Local Climate Change Program helps build awareness, expertise, and capacity to address the risk of climate change at the state and local levels. The program provides guidance and technical information to help state and local agencies prepare inventories of greenhouse gas emissions, develop action plans to reduce emissions, and educate their constituents. By emphasizing the many economic and environmental benefits of greenhouse gas reductions, the program encourages state and local decisionmakers to implement voluntary measures to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Statewide Recycling

Recycling programs provide an opportunity for states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly while creating jobs, reducing landfill and incinerator costs and conserving natural resources. By manufacturing new products out of discarded materials, recycling spurs innovation and economic development.

For most materials, recycling reduces energy-related carbon dioxide emissions produced during the extraction of natural resources and the manufacturing process. It also avoids greenhouse gas emissions from waste management activities. For example, one greenhouse gas—methane—is produced by the bacterial decomposition of organic materials such as yard waste, household waste, food waste, and paper in landfills. In

addition to keeping paper out of landfills, paper recycling allows trees to continue growing and absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Recycling is growing rapidly in the United States as more and more communities, businesses, and individuals realize the benefits. The number of curbside recycling programs nationwide has grown by 500 percent over the past five years. Today curbside recycling is provided to some 140 million Americans living in 9,000 communities.

The United States diverts about 27 percent of all discarded materials for recycling, up from 17 percent in 1990. For some commodities the numbers are even higher: 45 percent of all paper is now recycled, as are 60 percent of all steel cans, 66.5 percent of aluminum cans, and 75 percent of appliances. Some states and communities have achieved overall recycling rates as high as 50 percent.

Increasing the recycling rate can lower greenhouse gas emissions significantly. For example, a city of 100,000 with average waste generation (4.3 pounds per day per person) and recycling (27 percent) could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 10,000 metric tons of carbon equivalent per year by increasing its recycling rate to 40 percent.

On the national level, if the United States increased its recycling rate from 27 percent to 35 percent by 2005, greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by an estimated 9 million metric tons of carbon equivalent per year. Such a reduction would be equivalent to removing nearly 7 million cars from the road each year.

Recycling is estimated to create nearly five times as many jobs as landfilling does. The recycling jobs draw from the full spectrum of the labor market (ranging from low- and semi-skilled jobs to highly skilled positions). Materials sorters, dispatchers, truck drivers, brokers, sales representatives,

BENEFITS OF RECYCLING

- Reduces depletion of natural resources.
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reduces emissions of particulates, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur oxide pollution.
- Keeps valuable resources out of landfills.
- Reduces waste stream to landfills.
- Creates new businesses and jobs.

process engineers, and chemists are just some of the people needed in the recycling industry.

Recycling also creates new businesses that haul, process, and broker recovered materials, as well as companies that manufacture and distribute products made with recycled content. These recycling businesses put people to work.

The Federal Role

In November 1998, the federal government issued the National Recycling Challenge, which aims to increase the national recycling rate to 35 percent. Participation is open to any business; nongovernmental organization; school or university; or federal, state, or local government entity.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Solid Waste has funded projects that demonstrate innovative waste reduction approaches and associated greenhouse gas emission reductions. Projects range from helping communities reuse materials to increasing recycling rates in multifamily housing.

"By bringing new partners to the recycling efforts of businesses and families across the nation, we will better protect our natural resources, improve our quality of life, and strengthen our economy."

Vice President Al Gore
November 9, 1998

WasteWiSe is a voluntary partnership between EPA and U.S. businesses, state and local governments, and institutions to prevent waste, recycle, and buy and manufacture products made with recycled materials. Currently, more than 800 organizations participate in the WasteWiSe program.

EPA also provides technical and outreach assistance to encourage communities to implement Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) systems for solid waste. Under PAYT, residents are charged based on the amount of trash they discard. On average, communities with PAYT see waste reductions of 14 to 27 percent.

EPA's Jobs Through Recycling (JTR) program brings together the economic development and recycling communities through grants, networking, and information sharing. JTR grants fund four types of activities: recycling and reuse business assistance centers, recycling economic development advocates, investment forums, and demonstration projects.

EPA also is implementing a strategy to expand markets for recycled materials called Recycling Means Business. The strategy aims to support and sustain the link between increased market capacity for recycled and recyclable products and sustainable market growth.

A number of federal funding sources for solid waste research and management programs are available to state and local governments, the public, and small businesses. For a listing, see EPA's Jobs Through Recycling website (see address below).

EPA's State and Local Climate Change Program's States Guidance Document identifies recycling as one of the areas with greatest potential for comprehensive emissions reduction.

State Experience with Recycling

New Jersey

New Jersey has a mandatory statewide recycling program. Counties are responsible for enforcing the recycling law, and they must report on their recycling rates. Almost every city in the state has a curbside recycling program, and drop-off locations are provided in rural areas. New Jersey currently recycles approximately 44 percent of its municipal solid waste and 60 percent of total waste (including automobiles, hazardous wastes, and other materials not in municipal solid waste). Under the state's law, these rates must rise to 50 percent and 65 percent, respectively, by the year 2000.

New Jersey estimates that its recycling programs avoided 8.7 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 through 1995.

Minnesota

The City of Saint Paul's recycling program is funded with state, county, and city resources and has been managed since 1986 by the Neighborhood Energy Consortium, a private nonprofit organization. The program provides recycling pickup services to residences, multifamily buildings, city buildings, and small businesses that promote recycling to their clients. The multifamily program alone serves nearly 30,000 households in Saint Paul.

Saint Paul's recycling and composting programs reduced the city's greenhouse gas emissions in 1997 by an estimated 59,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

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For More Information

EPA's Office of Solid Waste (OSW) has developed materials for outreach and technical assistance on climate change and waste management.

Website: <http://www.epa.gov/mswclimate/>

EPA's WasteWiSe program works to prevent waste, recycle, and buy and manufacture products made with recycled materials.

Tel: 800-372-9473

Website: <http://www.epa.gov/wastewise/>

EPA's Pay As You Throw program helps communities implement systems in which residents are charged based on the amount of trash they discard.

Helpline (to order materials): 888-372-7298

Website: <http://www.epa.gov/payt/>

EPA's Jobs Through Recycling program provides information, technical assistance, and grants. The program's website includes a guide to funding opportunities for private nonprofit and public agencies.

Website: <http://www.epa.gov/jtr/>

The National Recycling Challenge, a White House initiative, aims to increase the national recycling rate to 35 percent.

Website: <http://www.ofee.gov/html/challenge.htm>

EPA's State and Local Climate Change Program helps states and communities reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in a cost-effective manner while addressing other environmental problems.

Website: <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/> and click on "Public Decision Makers" under the "Visitors Center."
